



## Arthroscopic Rotator Cuff Repair

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This protocol was developed for patients who have had an arthroscopic repair of a rotator cuff tear. The goal of this protocol is to advance range of motion and strength as directed while protecting the repair to ensure optimal healing.

The dressing is removed three days after surgery. The steri-strips are left on the incisions until the first post-operative office visit. After the dressing is removed you may shower quickly and gently pat your shoulder dry with a clean towel. If there is any drainage or concern about the healing of the incisions do not shower and gently clean the surface of the shoulder with rubbing alcohol and contact the office. The size of the rotator cuff tear is an important factor. Stretching exercises to regain motion are performed in sets of 5 repetitions, 5 times per day. The exercises are to be initiated at the first therapy visit. All exercises are intended for home rehabilitation.

### Weeks 1-4

- Pendulum circumduction (circular) exercises (no weights)
- Passive self- assisted (patient performs exercises) supine external rotation (PER)
- Small/medium tears may begin passive standing internal rotation (PIR) to the buttock level. Larger tears that involve all of the infraspinatus and teres minor
- Begin postural exercises with isometric serratus anterior, rhomboid and trapezius contraction
- Neck range of motion to prevent cervical spine soreness
- **The physical therapist should monitor supine passive forward elevation (PFE) weekly and ONLY IF stiffness develops, begin supine passive forward elevation, supine horizontal adduction, and standing passive internal rotation (PIR)**
- Unless otherwise indicated in the post-operative therapy referral the sling should be worn at all times except to perform home exercises five times per day
- Each stretch should be done for 5 repetitions, holding each stretch for 10 seconds

#### Weeks 5-6

- **Tears of all size discontinue the sling after the 4<sup>th</sup> week**
- Begin passive self-assisted supine forward elevation, supine horizontal adduction, and standing internal rotation behind the back
- Range of Motion Goals for Week 6
  - Passive forward elevation -- 140°
  - Active forward elevation -- Above shoulder level
  - Passive external rotation -- 40°
  - Passive internal rotation -- Upper lumbar

#### Week 7

- Pulleys for assisted elevation to begin gentle strengthening and elevation patterning
- Continue passive self-assisted range of motion stretching exercises
- Active range of motion exercises
- Begin active elevation in the supine position to minimize gravity affect

#### Weeks 8-11(?)

- Isometrics deltoid, internal rotation, external rotation
- Supine deltoid exercises
- Scapula stabilization

#### Week 12

- Theraband strengthening and light weights
- Continue passive self-assisted stretching to achieve full range of motion